Most Remarkable Passages
IN THE
LIFE
AND
Spiritual Experiences
OF
ELIZABETH WAST,
A Young Woman,
Sometime MISTRESS of the TRADES HOSPITAL
In EDINBURGH,
Most particularly, her Spiritual Experiences in attending Sacramental Occasions, and Praying Societies.

Extracted from her Memoirs
By the Revd. Mr. JOHN BROWN,
Minister of the Gospel at HADDINGTON.

PSALM LXVI. 16.
Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul.

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THE Spiritual Experiences OF ELIZABETH WAST.

I CANNOT tell the preciſe time when the Lord began to deal with my ſoul, but it was when I was very young. My mother and aunt being at great pains to inſtruct me, I apprehended heaven to be a place where I would get every thing comely and delightful, and therefore reſolved to abſtain from ſwearing, lying, and other like abominations, in order that I might obtain it. But the firſt temptation that I met with made me break through all my reſolutions. When the fears of lying for ever in hell diſturbed my conſcience, I lulled it aſleep by ſaying my prayers, which I had learned by rote, and ſtudying to be leſs wicked than others around me. Under the miniſtry of Meſſrs. W. Erſkine, and J. Kirkton in Edinburgh, I had my affections often remarkably moved, ſo that I durſt not neglect ſecret prayer, and ſometimes their inward glowing made me weep in my devotions. This made me think myſelf really converted. My repeating of ſermons which I never applied to my own conſcience, made others gratify my pride with their applauſe.

Mr. G. Meldrum having now become our miniſter, as he, in a ſermon from Joſhua xxiv. 15. "Chooſe "you this day whom ye will ſerve:" earneſtly called us to make a preſent choice of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt for our Saviour and Lord; my ſoul was powerfully melt-

melted and drawn by the word, and made willing to accept of and ſerve him all the days of my life.—But while he afterwards inſiſted, that none of our prayers or duties could be accepted, unleſs they were firſt put into Chriſt's hand, and unleſs we had a ſaving uptaking of Jeſus Chriſt in his perſon and offices: this filled me with fear and dread, that nothing that ever I had done could be accepted before God. But while he at conſiderable length diſcourſed concerning the nature, offices, and exhibition of Chriſt in the goſpel, from Gal. iv. 4, 5. Mat. i. 21. Acts iii. 22. Heb. vii. 26. Pſal. ii. 6. John iii. 14, 15. my ſoul was filled with admiration of him, and drawn out to embrace him as my only Saviour and Lord, and made content to deny myſelf, and take up my croſs and follow him. In conſequence of this, before, and immediately after, I firſt partook of the Lord's ſupper in 1694, I devoted myſelf to him by a ſolemn covenant.

For ſome months after this, I enjoyed ſuch delightful views of Jeſus Chriſt, in his lovelineſs and love, and his being in every reſpect ſuited to anſwer all my needs and plagues, ignorance, guilt, rebellion, and the like, and to be to me every thing neceſſary and profitable, and comfortable, as filled my heart with wonder and joy, and my lips with praiſe. But about the end of the year, I fell under ſtrong temptations to doubt of the *being of a God*, which threw me into dreadful conſternation. It filled me with anguiſh to think, that now I had no certain perſuaſion of the exiſtence of him, whom I lately looked on as the God of my ſalvation. But, while I was on my knees muſing like one diſtracted,—drowned in the depths of unbelief, the Lord pitied me, and brought the obſervation to my mind, the forgetting of which had occaſioned the temptation. He convinced me of my ſin in entertaining ſuch a temptation, ſurprized me with his comfortable preſence, confirmed my intereſt, and enabled me to plead his promiſe, that he was my God, my Redeemer, and my King. Not-

Notwithſtanding my remarkable ſweet deliverance, I ſoon found dreadful remains of atheiſm lurking in my heart, and ready to break forth whenever I met with a new temptation.—Being ſenſibly deſerted by the Lord, I fell under great deadneſs of ſpirit. I could not tell my caſe to any, it was ſo extraordinary. I could not find any of my Chriſtian companions ever to have been in ſuch a caſe. On January 1, 1695, I being with them, they converſed concerning the love of Jeſus Chriſt. This kindled in my breaſt a deſire to know him. But I thought that I was nothing but an hypocrite, and that ſince I had not walked in the Lord's way, none of his promiſes would be fulfilled on me, Num. xiv. 34. By a ſermon from Col. i. 21. "And you, who were enemies in your minds "by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled."—I had my bands looſed, and that night had comfortable fellowſhip with God. But Satan quickly tempted me to think that all was deluſion. My ignorance of Jeſus Chriſt under ſuch a clear goſpel miniſtry exceedingly confounded and pained me. In anguiſh I mourned that I was undone; that I have been born to be a monument of his diſpleaſure.—God hath forſaken me!—O that I had never been born! I debated with myſelf, that I was a ſtranger to Chriſt.—I ſaw myſelf undone, and yet was little affected with my condition. Nevertheleſs, it was refreſhful to me, that on the Lord's day Mr. Meldrum in his ſermons ſo exactly hit the caſe of my ſoul, though I had told it to none. That word 1 Cor. i. 30. "Chriſt is of God made un-"to us wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification and redemption:" eſpecially the word *redemption* was made ſweet to my ſoul.

Meanwhile Satan injected moſt blaſphemous and atheiſtical thoughts into my mind. I apprehended that there was no ſuch ſinner as I in the world. I thought never one of God's people had been tempted as I was. I found myſelf always ready to yield to his temptati-

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ons, I thought that there was no hope for me: that it was in vain for me to read or pray, as God would not have mercy on ſuch a hypocrite. When I attempted to pray, it was ſtrongly injected into my mind that there was no God, no Chriſt, no Holy Ghoſt; that the Bible was but an impoſture contrived by men, that miniſters were but villanous ſeducers of their people; that all my religious duties were but loſt labour; that the heathens were wiſer than I, in worſhipping a God which they knew.— I durſt tell my diſtreſs to none. I thought every body, even the moſt profligate ſwearer, happier than I, as they believed *that there is a God*. The reading of *Francis Spira* did much hurt to my ſoul, and was like to have led me to murder myſelf. But Bunyan's *Grace abounding to the Chief of Sinners*, eſpecially his account of the Lord's way with him, under his atheiſtical diſtreſs, was very uſeful. But I would not believe unleſs a ſenſible miracle was wrought.

When I continued in this dreadful wickedneſs and trouble, Jeſus Chriſt, by his Spirit, ſhewed me that I had notwithſtanding as free acceſs to his throne of grace as ever. The very thoughts of this tranſported me; and, as ſoon as I could, I retired to ſecret prayer. The Lord kindly ſhewed me the abſurdity and wickedneſs of my yielding to the temptation, and promiſed that *He would never leave me, nor forſake me*, Heb. xiii. 5. tho' I had ſo much forſaken him. He gave me a new diſcovery of his own nature and perfections, and gave me ſuch a firm perſuaſion of his truth, as I could have ſealed it with my blood. With great freedom I pour-ed out my heart before him. I was filled with joy and rejoicing. Our miniſter's ſermon from Rev. iii. 20. and that word Ezek. xvi. 6, 8. "And when I paſſed by "thee, and ſaw thee polluted in thy blood, then thy "time was a time of love; and I ſaid unto thee *Live*. "And I entered into covenant with thee, and thou

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"becameſt mine:" filled me with wonder and aſtoniſhment. And I, in the moſt ſolemn manner, took all things around me to witneſs, that I heartily embraced Jeſus Chriſt, in his perſon, natures, and offices, to be mine. The nine appropriating MYES in Pſalm xviii. 1, 2, 3. were alſo exceedingly ſweet to my ſoul. O the pleaſant life that I for ſome days enjoyed, wondering at, and thanking my God for his love to me thro' Chriſt Jeſus.

Bnt alas! I had ſcarcely ſung that *my mountain ſtood ſtrong*, when Satan and my inward corruptions gradually carried me off my feet, and made me ſlacken my pace in duty. In conſequence of this, I fell aſleep, and contracted ſuch a ſpiritual deadneſs, that I could do nothing at all. I was ſadly overcome by ſleep, when I was at ſecret prayer, which made me look o myſelf as an hypocrite. My corruptions dreadfully raged and prevailed. I loſt my joy and comfort; and ſoon forgot the Lord's late mighty work on my behalf. For a time I laboured to oppoſe my corruptions and temptations: but my beloveſt luſt, dreſſed up in a religious like appearance, gradually enticed, entangled, and polluted my heart.

I no ſooner purpoſed to attend a communion at *Laſwade*, than Satan laboured to perſuade me, that ſuch an unfaithful covenant-breaking wretch could not without great preſumption, go thither, or be accepted at the Lord's table. When I went off, my unbelief and atheiſm, my want of love to Jeſus Chriſt, my pride, both natural and ſpiritual, my hypocriſy, my backſliding, and my predominant ſin were all preſented to my conſcience in order to diſcourage me. When I inſiſted, that no cure could be had for theſe ſins, but in Chriſt: Satan urged, that I had not on the *wedding garment*. I replied, that I would go to Jeſus Chriſt in my filthy rags, that he might clothe me with change of raiment. I reſolved, like Eſther, to caſt myſelf at the feet of his mercy; and if I ſhould periſh, I would

but

but get what I deſerved. Notwithſtanding many difficulties, both ſpiritual and temporal, I came to the place on Saturday. The ſermons, that day, were moſtly diſcouraging to me, except a note in the end of the ſecond. After ſeveral alterations of my inward frame, ſometimes to the better, and ſometimes to the worſe, I came home, with ſome hope but little comfort. I ſoon perceived from Acts xvii. 23. 1 Cor. xv. 34. that I had procured my diſtreſs to myſelf by my ignorance of God.—My darkneſs ſo increaſed, that neither promiſes nor threatnings affected me. This made me conclude, that Chriſt had no ſpecial love to me.—Notwithſtanding my dreadful deſpair and its wicked attendants, I, almoſt every Sabbath, either in public or ſecret, got ſome cordial to ſupport me, and keep me from utter fainting. But even on theſe very days the prevalency of my peculiar corruptions made me often roar to the Lord Jeſus, that he would exerciſe his kingly power in ſubduing them.

In October 1695, I, at another ſacramental occaſion, was helped to give myſelf anew to the Lord. But the apprehenſions which I had of ſins dwelling in me, and mingling themſelves with all my duties, made my life a burden to me, and produced in me ſtrong deſires of death. Being blamed by my fellow Chriſtians, and rebuked by the Spirit of God for deſerting the miniſter of our own pariſh, in order to hear Mr. Meldrum, I attended our own paſtor, and finding him diſcourſing on the covenant of grace, I was exceedingly comforted, and never after left my pariſh kirk.—The way of the Lord was then very ſweet and pleaſant to me; and in tellling my Chriſtian intimates whas the Lord was doing for my ſoul. But the ſtate of my father's family lay very heavy on me, as we had not the daily worſhip of God in it; and my father appeared not to have any concern about ſpiritual and eternal things. The afflictions which they endured, and my dealing with my father, wrought no re-

reformation among them. I therefore could do no more, than earneſtly pray for his converſion, in which I met with great enlargement.

After I had got another inexpreſſible refreſhment by Mr. John Moncrief, our miniſter's diſcourſes on the *converſion of Zaccheus*, Luke xix. I fell under the fearful prevalency of my inward luſts. I loſt ſight of my intereſt in Chriſt, and looked on myſelf as nothing but a painted hypocrite without, and a neſt of devils within.—I concluded, that the fate of the *houſe built upon the ſand*, in the parable, would be my own. My fearful loads of corruption made me often beſeech the Lord either to take me out of this world, or keep me from the evil.—I earneſtly longed, that Jeſus Chriſt, as my King made over to me in the goſpel, would ſubdue my unmortified corruptions. In this manner I toiled on, till, at a ſacramental occaſion, 1696, where by means of Mr. W. Moncrief's ſermon on Saturday from John xi. 40. and by J. Moncrief's action ſermon from Ezek. xvi. 6, 8. my ſoul was remarkably enlightened and melted, and made to accept of Jeſus Chriſt in all his offices and relations, even his croſs. Theſe words, "I have loved thee with an "everlaſting love," Jer. xxxi. 3. "I will betroth thee "unto me for ever," Hoſ. ii. 19. were darted into my ſoul with great power and life. I was led to an earneſt wreſtling with God in behalf of the church, my relations, and myſelf, that the Lord would make me ſincere in every duty,—ſtedfaſt in my vows, and a cordial ſympathizer with his people:—a uſeful branch in his vineyard, bringing forth fruit to his glory; and humble under mercies received. Let carnaliſts ſay what they will, I, tho' naturally of a merry diſpoſition never knew what it was to be really joyful, till I received Jeſus Chriſt.

A terrible fire, that happened in the Canongate, which put the whole city into confuſion,—led me to obſerve the following hints relative to worldly things,

That

That though they may assist such as have them with more time and opportunity to serve God, in relieving the poor members of Christ; yet men must suffer a great trouble before they get them; they are apt to decoy our love from Christ; many lose their souls in seeking them; they afford no real comfort on a death bed; they can be no ransom for our sins, or avail us before God's tribunal; they hinder from receiving of Christ; they are no tokens of God's love; they render many like devils in pride; the loss of them may soon fill us with anguish and vexation; they are seldom gained with a good conscience; we must quickly die from them, and leave them to such as will scarcely thank us for them, or that will improve them to their own ruin, both in time and in eternity; and to account for them at the judgment seat of Christ with joy and not with grief, will be very difficult.

Self-conceit and self-seeking began to prevail in a manner which I had not formerly experienced. I found it hard work to be denied to my duties, prayers and tears. But I found, That *if any man will be Christ's disciple, he must deny himself.* — I saw I had fearfully robbed God of the glory due to him, and carried about my selfishness wherever I went, or whatever I did. On examination I found that I was like the hypocrites described in scripture, Isa. lviii. 2. Mark x. 20. &c. Our minister's discourse from Mark x. 21. "Take up "thy cross, and follow me:" were very trying to my conscience. But, by some notes in them, I was led out to embrace Jesus Christ as offered to me in the gospel. I resolved, that no cross should separate me from him; and submitted to every cross, except the absence of God in times of trouble, and being given up by him to a selfish disposition of heart.

Being convinced of the treachery of my heart, I fell under great fears, that all my resolutions would be broken; therefore often besought the Lord to keep them for me. — I also found indwelling corruptions,

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eſpecially my predominant luſt, raging within me.—After performance of religious duties, they harraſs'd me in a peculiar manner, which made me ſee that nothing could cure me but the power of Chriſt.—It was ſome comfort to me, that having, contrary to cuſtom, revealed my caſe to a Chriſtian companion, I found that my condition was not ſingular. I ſet apart a day for faſting and ſupplication relative to my predominant idol, and earneſtly cried for conformity to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and for as much ſanctification as could be attained in this life. I got my heart pour-ed out before the Lord, and his powerful impreſſion of Phil. ii, 13. "God worketh in you to will and to "do of his good pleaſure," made me believe, that my requeſts were accepted, and would be granted.

Having, on the Thurſday before the communion, gone to Laſwade, with much pleaſant contemplation by the way, I found that the faſt had been obſerved the day before. This threw me into terrible agony, and made me return weeping and mourning that I had loſt ſuch an opportunity. I tried to find out the cauſe of the Lord's controverſy with me in this point, and to cry to him, that he would ſearch me, and ſhew me all the ſecret abominations that lurked in my heart. Notwithſtanding my earneſt longings for his preſence, I was much deſerted on Saturday and Sabbath; but I met with ſome pleaſant enlargements on Monday. That word, Iſa xliii. 22,—25. was powerfully applied to my heart: I was ſo helped, that almoſt every thing I caſt my eyes on, led me out to ſome ſpiritual meditation. John xiv. 27. "My peace I give unto "you," &c. was alſo very ſweet to my ſoul.

But the plagues of my heart ſoon ſo fearfully beſet me, that I went near calling all my former experiences deluſion. After many toſſings, as I was one night extraordinarily concerned in prayer about an unparalleled meaſure of ſinful corruption which dwelt in me, I enjoyed the moſt delightful fellowſhip with God thro' Chriſt,

Chriſt, and was made to ſee that Jeſus was exceedingly grieved, that notwithſtanding all that he had done to and for his people, they ſhould ſo readily doubt of his love — I was made to accept of the croſs in whatever form he pleaſed. But my indwelling luſts ſoon appeared ſtronger than ever. — I became altogether indiſpoſed for religious duties, public or ſecret, till, at a private ſermon by Mr. John Hepburn on Iſa. lxiii. 3. I got all my bands looſed by a free goſpel offer of Chriſt and his ſalvation, and was enabled, in a very ſolemn manner, to accept of him for my ALL IN ALL, on his own terms. I panted for the moſt complete conformity to him, and the moſt intimate communion with him. I was enabled to claim Him as my Lord and my God; and he promiſed, that I ſhould call him *My Father, and not turn away from him.*

Having ſoon after an opportunity of a ſacramental occaſion at Preſtonpans, I thought the Lord called me to attend thereat, by theſe two ſcriptures, Mat. vii. 7. "Seek, and ye ſhall find; knock, and it ſhall be opened "unto you." Rev. xiv. 4. "Follow the Lamb whi-"therſoever he goeth." Notwithſtanding that bodily trouble and bad weather threatened to hinder me, I got thither, and was much refreſhed by our miniſter's ſermon on Saturday from Exod. xx. 24. in which he ſhewed, That Chriſt was coming *as a merchant*, to ſee what his people needed; — *as a phyſician* to heal the ſick;—*as a ſuitor* to a bride;—and *as a king*: and by Mr. Andrew's action ſermon from Matth. xxii. 4. in which he made a free and full offer of Jeſus Chriſt, and his fulneſs, as all READY for us. Having begun to ſerve the firſt table with that word, "What is thy "requeſt, queen Eſther? and it ſhall be granted thee," my heart cried out, that Chriſt the bridegroom's image might be preſently ſtamped on my ſoul; and that he enlighten my mind to underſtand his word; that he would pity my parents and acquaintances; and that he would purge his church,

But

But the inconceiveable ocean of iniquity that lay hid in my heart quickly prevailed againſt me. My predominant luſt raged with ſuch force, as made me think I would turn out a ſcandal to religion. The Lord's ſupper was diſpenſed at Edinburgh, but I durſt not communicate, tho' it was a remarkable day of power to many: one of the ſermons by Mr. Riddel, from 1 Kings viii. 39. on the difficulty of attaining to the knowledge of the true God, was moſt ſuitable to my caſe. In my diſtreſs it peculiarly perplexed me, that my caſe was ſingular, and that my Chriſtian friends not knowing it, but thinking that it went well with my ſoul, did not ſympathize with me. But I was made to obſerve, that Chriſt trod the wine preſs *alone*, and could only ſympathize with lonely caſes. It was alſo extremely heavy to me, that the promiſes of my father's converſion, Pſ. lxxxviii. 10. 1 Cor. xv. 58. If. liii. 10. and of my own growth in grace, 1 Theſ. iv. 3. Rom. vi. 14. Mat. viii. 3. Jer. xxxi. 33. and xxxii. 40. appeared contracted by providence. But theſe ſcriptures, 1 Pet. i. 7. Luke i. 45. encouraged me to wait, and not deſpair. I obſerved, that in ſcripture a ſtorm of providence ſeemed ordinarily to claſh with the promiſes made to the ſaints immediately after they had received them.—I ſaw from Pſalm xxxvii. 4, 7. and xxv. 15. and xl. 1, 2. that it was my duty to wait patiently, and the Lord would, in his own time, let me ſee the full accompliſhment of his promiſes, Heb. x. 23.

His other temptations being in ſome meaſure unſucceſsful, Satan laboured to puff me up with ſelf-conceit. I ſaw ſelfiſhneſs ſo mingled with my religious ſervices, that I feared I had made SELF, in ſome form or other, my principal end in them all, not the glory of God: but I was directed to apply to Chriſt as my Phyſician, who hath power over all plagues; and to conſider what dreadful temptations he endured and conquered. I afterward fell under an extraordinary

nary deadneſs of ſoul, ſo that I could ſcarcely apply myſelf to any religious duty.—It added to my trouble that my Chriſtian friends did not pity me, but chided me for complaining, and aſked, What better I was of that? But I found Chriſt a friend, when no eye would pity me. He powerfully impreſſed that word Iſa. xlix. 15. "Can a woman forget her ſucking child?— "Yea, ſhe may forget: yet will I not forget thee," on my heart, as I was going to our *weekly meeting for prayer*, which made me to hope and rejoice in him. On account of my backſliding, I prayed to the Lord, that he would turn me, and I ſhould be turned. A ſermon of our miniſter on Jer. iv. 8. "Draw nigh "to God, and he will draw near to you," was very refreſhing to me.

After I came home from church, I examined for what end the Lord had permitted me to go ſo far out of his way; and perceived, that it was to make me ſee clearly the difference between the way of ſin and that of godlineſs; and tho' I could wander out of his way, I could not return again of myſelf; and that it is more difficult to walk with God in his way, than to find him. This produced in me a vehement deſire for the Spirit of God to lead and keep me in his way, and direct and enable me to perform every duty. Theſe ſcriptures John xix. 26. Mat. vii. 11. made me believe that my deſire ſhould be granted. — This encouraged me to renew my covenant engagements to the Lord at his table, April 1698, and there to beg of him, that he would make me live in the Spirit;—be clothed in the Spirit with ſincerity, humility, ſelf-denial, zeal for the intereſt of Chriſt, and love to all his ways;—to walk in the Spirit after Chriſt's example, in holineſs, faith and patience,—ſtill eyeing the glory of God in every thing I did; —and that, as a member of his myſtical body, I might have a real feeling of the caſes of all his fellow-children.

At

At the ſacramental occaſion of Dalkeith, I was ſo remarkably deſerted, that I durſt not approach to the Lord's table. But, at another at Largs, I had moſt remarkable fellowſhip with Jeſus Chriſt, both in public and private.—I ſaw the ſoul of a believer could be filled with nothing but Jeſus Chriſt.—I had not long returned home, when the prevalency of inward corruptions turned all my joys into mourning. I, with terror, thought of the dreadful diſcovery which the Lord would make of my hypocriſy at the laſt day; and how men and devils would juſtify his final condemnation of me. Nevertheleſs, I ventured to go to the communion at Preſtonpans, and there I got ſome refreſhment to my ſoul, and was enabled to pour out my heart before the Lord. But, on the general faſt on account of the dearth and threatened war, I got my bands looſed in a remarkable manner, and was enabled to lament my own ſins and thoſe of the land.

About this time, my intimate companion deſerted the eſtabliſhed miniſtry, which occaſioned me no ſmall concern to know my own duty. She nevertheleſs continued in a praying ſociety with me, and in our intimacy in revealing the caſe of our ſoul to each other.—In ſecret prayer, I had often a very heaven upon earth, and particularly on the firſt of Jan. 1699. which I ſet apart for ſolemn faſting, ſupplication and covenanting with God.—The firſt part of this year I lived as in the ſuburbs of heaven,—in the ſecond part as in the confines of hell: in the end of it, I met with ſome remarkable providence. I ſaw light and glory in the ſcriptures, and taſted ſweetneſs in them, which I never did before. I looked on all things as loſs and dung in compariſon of Jeſus Chriſt.—My heart was opened to receive him in all his offices.—Beholding myſelf an unparalleled ſinner, I was filled with aſtoniſhment at his love in ſaving me. At the communion of Preſtonpans, I was altogether raviſhed with his glory and love, and begged a ſhare of it for my fellow Chriſtians at home and abroad.

About the firſt of April, I fell under a more dreadful degree of ſoul-trouble than ever I had experienced. Satan firſt decoyed me from a careful reading of the ſcriptures, in which at that time I found great delight. In conſequence of this, great deadneſs ſeized on my ſpirit, that I could perform no religious ſervice with any vigour or life. Satan violently tempted me, that all the promiſes were contradicted by providence; and that therefore all my pretence of believing them was but mere deluſion.— I retired, and on my knees uttered many ſinful and deſperate expreſſions to the Lord. I almoſt reſolved to live in the neglect of all religious duties, as I thought it impoſſible to reconcile God's promiſes and providences. I made ſhipwreck of the promiſes, and was in danger of loſing my reaſon, by means of my inward anguiſh. But theſe ſcriptures ſounded in my ears, "Is any thing too hard "for the Lord," Gen. xviii. 14. "Heaven and earth "ſhall paſs away; but not one jot or tittle of the law "ſhall fail," Luke xvi. 17. Mat. v. 18. "Of all that "the Lord hath ſpoken, not one word hath failed," "Joſh. xxiii. 14. "Be not afraid: only believe," Mark v. 36. But ſuch was the unbelief and atheiſm of my heart, that I could believe nothing. I queſtioned the reality of religion in general. I was tempted to burn all the records of former experiences, as in hell it would fill me with torment to hear of them. I fell into deep melancholy, which hurt my body. My former experiences afforded me no comfort. When I went to ſacramental occaſions, I found nothing but an abſent God. But ſome dark views which I obtained at two of them, pierced me to the heart with grief, that I ſhould have, at Satan's deſire, laid aſide theſe duties, in which God had ſo often met with my ſoul, and ſo reſiſted the motions of his Spirit.

Hearing a ſermon in November with much wearineſs and wandering, I ſat very impatiently while a child was baptized. A dog bit my leg moſt deſperately.

rately. A physician who came accidentally to our house, applied some medicines, which healed the most dangerous wound. In this I saw mercy rejoicing against judgment. Soon after, my brother fell into a fever. While I was concerned for him, these words occurred, John xi. 4. "This sickness is not unto "death, but for the glory of God,"—and afterward, Mat. viii. 26. "Why are ye so fearful, O ye of little "faith?" Isa. xxxviii 5. "I have heard thy prayers. "I have seen thy tears. I have added to his days." He still grew worse and worse. And after he began to recover, he relapsed into a second fever, much more dangerous than the first. This filled me with dreadful perplexity, as I thought, if he died, all the promises would also fail of accomplishment to me.—I was also affrighted from prayer. But while I was meditating before I essayed it, the Lord by his word taught my soul, that *he was my salvation*; that *thro' manifold tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of of God*; and that *I ought not to despise the chastening of the Lord, nor be weary of his correction*, Psal. xxv. 3. Acts xiv. 22. Prov iii. 11.—Encouraged by these, I applied to prayer, in which my unbelief durst not appear before the Lord. By that word, Psal. cxviii. 17, 18. "I shall not die, but live, and declare the "works of the Lord. He hath chastened me sore, "but not given over to death," he assured me of my brother's recovery, which soon after happened. But that word, *Be not weary of his correction*, running still in my mind, made me lay my account with some further trouble, or even the loss of some relation.

During my brother's second fever, I had many hours of sweet fellowship with God. But the fright I had got, flowing into my breast, produced a most troublesome boil in it. Tho' I would not permit any physician to lay his hand on it, the Lord blessed some simple medicines for my recovery, and filled my mouth with songs of praise.—While the spiritual condition

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of my aged father lay very heavy on my heart, I was informed, that he had been taken with a purging and vomiting of blood. On seeing him, I represented to him, that he was dying, and begged him to lay to heart the eternal concerns of his salvation. He gave me little answer but by grievous looks. My soul was overwhelmed with fear, lest all the requests which I had presented to God for him, should come to nothing; and that he would be a castaway. I, by myself, and with a companion, wrestled with the Lord for his conversion. We, as well as others that pled for him at the throne of grace, had great liberty in so doing. On the day of his death, these words, "The devil is "gone out of thy daughter," Mark vii 29. "—Ye "are compleat in him, who is the head of all princi- "palities and power," Col. ii 10. "He shall be mine "in that day that I make up my jewels; and I will "spare him as a man doth his son that serveth him," Mal iii 16. impressed on my mind, produced in me a sweet inward composure. And, after his death, I, with thankfulness, observed the mercies mingled with his trouble and death.

Still that word, Prov iii 11. haunted my mind, and made me expect some further trials. Soon after I received a very unseasonable, imprudent, and unchristian information of the loss of a considerable part of my worldly property, by means of a near and dear relation. But that word, "Thou art my sure portion, "O Lord, Ps cxix 57. produced me more comfort and joy, than if I had been told, that I was made heir to the most powerful and wealthy monarch.—I was led into many useful meditations on the vanity and uncertainty of all temporal enjoyments.

On the 3d of February, 1700, a most dreadful fire brake out in the meal-market, which, being enraged by a strong wind, burnt so furiously, that none durst come near to quench it. The spark flew over a great part of the city, and put me in mind of Sodom and

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of hell. The parliament cloſe in a flame that aſcended into the midſt of heaven. Before this happened, I had for ſome time a dreadful impreſſion of fire on my ſpirit.—A ſmell of fire had been perceived about that place ſeveral days before, without any diſcoverable cauſe. It began at his houſe who delivered the covenant to the hangman to be burnt, and who never after that, had the wonted uſe of his hand, with which he delivered it, tho' he lamented his deed while he lived. It ſtopt juſt where the covenant was burnt; which made many cry out, *This is come upon us for burning the covenant.* In reſpect of the uſeleſſneſs of all human help in ſtopping it;—in its rendering many families deſtitute;—in its regardleſſneſs to all ranks, and in its deſtroying only outward enjoyments, it not a little reſembled the preceding Prelatic perſecution. It made me plainly perceive the extreme folly of thoſe who truſt in worldly riches.

About ſeven weeks after, the Lord's ſupper was diſpenſed in the city. But though it was a time of power and comfort to many, my own peeviſhneſs made it a very dark and uncomfortable communion to me.—Soon after, I met with a very heavy trial from an airth which I did not expect, and which ſeemed to contradict the promiſe of God to me.—But I was enabled to be dumb, becauſe the Lord did it; and I was by it inſtructed in the impropriety of truſting to friends or relations.—Meeting with a companion, whoſe fellowſhip had often been refreſhful to me, we prayed together before we parted, with great enlargement of heart.

It was thought proper, that I ſhould return to a family, which I thought I had left, at the call of God, on *account of the want of the worſhip of God in it*, and the contention and mocking at religion and miniſters which prevailed in it. In compliance with my mother's urgency, I went back, contrary to my own light and inclination, and found them rather worſe than better.

better. *In conſequence thereof, the Lord ſenſibly departed from me* in religious duties. In ſecret prayer, I was plagued with ſleepineſs or wandering of mind. A terrible diſcontentment commenced in my mind, that nothing could be pleaſant to me. Spiritual plagues of all ſorts ſeized on me, ſo that, for two years, I did not enjoy one full day of inward eaſe and quiet.—Sometimes, however, the Lord enabled me to pour my complaints into his boſom; and on Sabbath he gave me ſome tokens of his love, in enabling me to plead with him, or in promiſing me deliverance, Pſal. lxvi. 19, 20.—But, thro' the week, I was like a beaſt before him. There was ſuch a difference between the condition of my ſoul on Sabbath and other days, that I often wiſhed for two Sabbaths in the week.

I had great pleaſure in hearing Mr. W Mitchel's diſcourſes on Rom. vi. 12. relative to the power of indwelling ſin. I earneſtly longed for the deſtruction of my own. By Sermons of Mr. J. Moncrief, on Rev. xxii 17. I was led out to a ſolemn acceptance of Jeſus Chriſt, as offered in the goſpel—On the faſt day before the ſacrament, I got an extenſive of the ſins of the land, and tokens of the Lord's wrath againſt it, and my own ſinfulneſs of heart and life: and was enabled, with brokenneſs of heart, to bewail them before the Lord; and to wreſtle with him, that he would pardon and purge from them. Not finding relief for my ſoul, in hearing the ſermons on Saturday, I reſolved to ſpend the night in prayer. After I had wreſtled 3 or 4 hours for others, I got remarkable liberty in laying my own caſe before the Lord, and ſupplicating mercy, and devoting myſelf to him. I had ſcarcely entered the place of public worſhip on Sabbath, when Satan began to buffet me. I was much diſtreſſed, that I could not ſee my name among thoſe invited to the Lord's table, till our miniſter invited ſuch as had a *nameleſs* caſe, to come, that Chriſt might make language of it. At the table, I was enabled

abled to make a ſolemn ſurrender of myſelf to Jeſus Chriſt, that he might diſlodge all my idols, deſtroy all my ſinful corruptions, ſupply my wants, and enable me to cleave to himſelf, and perform what he required of me, chiefly aiming at his glory.

Finding that I could not ſtay in the family, with a good conſcience, I, in prayer, beſought the Lord to relieve me. It was an inexpreſſible eaſe to my mind when the day appointed for my departure drew nigh. But, the very night before, I was ſeized with a fever, and thus detained a while longer. I knew not what to think of his providence. My body recovered, but I perceived no amendment in the frame and diſpoſition of my ſpirit. It added to my grief, that ſome of my godly friends urged me to ſtay in the family, as I might be uſeful to it. But I more clearly ſaw it my duty to leave it.—The death of K. William lay very heavy on me, as it did on all the godly, while the profane Jacobites exceedingly rejoiced.—After I had attended two ſacramental occaſions, at which my ſoul was not generally in a good frame, tho' I experienced ſome touches of the Lord's power and grace, and met with ſome ſeaſonable encouragement to ſing of the *judgment of remaining corruptions*, as well as of divine deſertions,—I, with great ſatisfaction of mind, left the family in which I was.

As, a little before, I had enjoyed great refreſhment to my own ſoul in wreſtling with the Lord in behalf of a dying profeſſor whoſe life had been untender, and in prayer and ſpiritual converſe a whole night, at one of the communions I had lately been at; ſo my attendance on ſome others, was now crowned with much uſeful inſtruction, or delightful enlargement to my ſoul; and I was enabled to take hold of Jeſus Chriſt, as offered to me in the goſpel, for wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification, and redemption, and to devote myſelf wholly to him in life and in death.

After

After I had been ſome ſhort time at Dalkeith, and Innerkeithing, where I had enjoyed ſatisfaction in the ordinances of God, I returned to Edinburgh at Martinmas 1702. I met with a ſharp trial from the hand of a near relation; but was made to ſee that it was God's correction of me on account of my grieving his Spirit; that my kind Father had mixed my cup; and that many of the Lord's people had ſuch trials.

The beginning of 1703, we were apprehenſive of the toleration, if not re-eſtabliſhment of Prelacy: but God, by throwing the Parliament into confuſion on that point, prevented it, in his gracious anſwer to our prayers. Retiring to Eaſt Lothian, I, at ſacramental occaſions, found God remarkably preſent. Leaving this place, I came to the *Inch*, where I found favour with thoſe with whom I lived, and where the Lord gave me remarkable, but ſhort-lived victories over my corruptions, which did eaſily beſet me.

In 1704. the Lord, at firſt, led me out to ſweet meditations on what I had been ſeeking, gotten from and given to Jeſus Chriſt. But, by my neglecting to watch and fight againſt my predominant luſts, my inward plagues increaſed. I was terrified, leſt I ſhould prove an hypocrite. My fears, that the Lord had left me, were like to ſink me—But, in hearing a ſermon on John xii. 26. my ſoul was powerfully melted with the love of Chriſt; and my heart burnt with deſire to follow and ſerve him. But my proſperous ſtate was ſoon turned into miſery. About a fortnight after a ſervant fell into a fever; as I was much impreſſed with her death, I wreſtled with the Lord to prepare her for the eternal ſtate. Being much fatigued, I caſt myſelf on a bed in the next room: in a moment the candle which I had with me, kindled the hangings. But, providentially, one came to the door; I got up like one half diſtracted, and put out the flame at the expence of burning my own hands. I was in terror leſt the fright might haſten the death of the ſick perſon,

ſon, and be chargeable on me. This ſhut me up to ſolemn prayer to God for both her and myſelf. And tho' my body was in extremity of pain, it was a pleaſant night to my ſoul. I beheld the *Sun of righteouſneſs ariſe with healing under his wings*. I ſaw that, in this diſpenſation of the burning, God had an holy hand, reproving me for a flame of paſſion, in which I had been a few days before. I ſaw that Satan had a malicious, and I had a careleſs hand in it

Notwithſtanding ſome blinks of the Lord's countenance at the communions of Daſkeith, Libberton, Laſwade, and Leith, I was generally oppreſſed with ſore diſtreſs of mind. I thought all the Lord's promiſes of my ſanctification were manifeſtly contradicted by providence. My atheiſm and unbelief haunted me like a ghoſt. I loſt inclination to religious duties, and had no ſtrength to oppoſe ſpiritual enemies. My fellow Chriſtians being ignorant of my caſe, none of them could ſympathize with me. I urged ſcripture-promiſes upon myſelf, to encourage my hopes of an outgate; but unbelief ſwallowed up all comforts.—The Lord ſupported me by theſe ſcriptures, Jer. xxx. 7. Num. xxiii 19. Hoſ. xiv. 3.—By a ſermon of a ſtranger miniſter on Pſ. xxxi 23. "O love the Lord "all ye his ſaints," eſpecially after I came home, to conſider what the Lord had done for my ſoul, even more than he had done for many of his children; how ungratefully I beſtowed the love due to him upon his rivals; and that he was yet willing to give new proofs of his love, after all I had done. The whole xvi. of Ezekiel was preſented to me as a juſt picture of myſelf.—Under this diſcovery, I longed to be with him, where there could be no parting or ſinning.—I was led to admire, that, tho' under my ſpiritual diſtempers I alway expected the Lord to come againſt me in ſome dreadful judgment, yet when he comes, it is wholly in love.—O how I wiſhed for *wings like a dove, that I might fly away, and be at reſt* above!

In

In the end of 1704, I was oppreſſed by trouble of mind: but in the beginning of 1705, had my ſpirits compoſed, and was enabled to attend to religious duties with calmneſs. — I had different trials of reproach in the families that I lived in: but the Lord ſupported me under them, and kept me, or religion from ſuffering by them.—My ſpirits were oppreſſed with the *Uniting* our nation with England on terms contrary to our ſolemn covenant engagements to God, and the ſad conſequences which I apprehended would and did iſſue from it. I cried mightily to the Lord to preſerve and revive his covenanted work of reformation among us.—Returning to Gilmerton in Eaſt Lothian, I, hearing Mr. Finlay of Preſtonhall, at ſacramental occaſions, and on ordinary Sabbaths, had my ſoul much refreſhed.—Nevertheleſs, I had no ſmall diſtreſs of mind thro' apprehenſions that God's providences to me, were contradicting his promiſes. — I thought myſelf like a travelling woman, having many violent pangs, every one of them as if ſhe would juſt be delivered and yet bringing forth nothing but wind,—or like a ſhip toſſed by ſtorms, ſometimes near land, and yet by a contrary wind, driven without ſight of it: and like a bird purſued from place to place by the hawk.—One time, when in agony of ſoul, I was belching forth before the Lord my infernal complaints of the irreconcileableneſs of his providences with his promiſes, he darted into my mind, *Doſt thou well to be angry?* Jonah iv. 4, 9.—My ſoul was ſtruck with wonder and aſtoniſhment at his unparalleled forbearance and kindneſs.—I deſired to mourn over theſe things in my conduct, which had offended my ſo gracious a Lord: but, alas! my corrupt heart!

I nevertheleſs quickly relapſed into my doubts of the reality of my grace, and the reconcileableneſs of God's providences to his promiſes.—I cried bitterly for deliverance:—but the more I uſed means to remove my plagues, they ſtuck the cloſer to me.

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Being unskilful and unfit for my business, I begged the Lord would direct me to manage things to my master and mistress's satisfaction. He granted my request in a degree that astonished me. — Sir David Kinloch's family going to London, I could not think of going along with them.—Providence, in a few days after, fixed me mistress of the *Trades Hospital*.—The Lord directed me to execute this office far beyond my expectation. In prayer with, and instruction of the children, I often felt sensible assistance, with power and life to my own soul.—But, alas! when I was at secret duty, I had no life, nor sap; and thought I had been all my days a painted hypocrite.—Such strange contradictions were in my case.—At once, I was overwhelmed with several kinds of outward trouble; violent temptations from Satan to atheism, unbelief, and quarreling with God;—dreadfully raging inward corruptions;—and, which was heaviest of all, an absent and angry Lord. These things so disheartened and disquieted me, that I had neither heart nor hand for religious duties, but was altogether dead, senseless and secure. An eruption of passion occasioned by my overhearing one sadly reproach me, helped on the bad frame of my soul.—But in secret and public exercises at our sacramental occasion, I had my soul searched, and my bands remarkably loosed. All my former experiences were cleared up as truly gracious. The promises of God's covenant were set before me in their fulness, freedom, and infallible firmness; and I was enabled to lay hold on, and claim them as the ground of my sure hope, and to devote my whole self to Jesus Christ, as made of God to me, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption, that he might instruct, justify, sanctify, and save me.

N. B. Her experiences after her marriage, if recorded, were never published.

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